

Make the move to CO-OP HOUSING

WHY 250,000 CANADIANS HAVE CHOSEN THE CO-OP HOUSING ALTERNATIVE

A home. A community

Are you looking for a home you can afford – one where you can put down roots? Do you want to live in a community that includes people from all walks of life – where people get to know their neighbours and work together to make their co-op a success? Then consider joining the quarter of a million people across Canada who call co-op housing home.

How housing co-ops work

From the curb, housing co-operatives look like any other street address. The co-op difference is on the inside.

Co-operatives are democratic organizations, controlled jointly by the people who live there. When you move into a co-op, you are not just a tenant. You become a member. Together with other members, you will elect a board of directors from among yourselves, set the rents, and make all the important decisions about your home.

That doesn't mean you will be spending all your time at meetings, or spend Saturdays on a work crew. Most co-ops hire a professional manager and maintenance help to take care of the day-to-day work.

It does mean that everyone who lives in the co-op has a say, and a stake in its future.



Housing without profit

Housing co-ops run on a non-profit basis. Individual co-op units are not bought or sold, and there's no outside landlord making a profit. Instead, each household pays a monthly charge to cover a portion of the co-op's expenses.

It's up to the members to vote on that monthly charge. Members decide together how to budget for good quality housing that remains affordable.

All co-ops also set aside money to cover major repairs in the future, and any surpluses are re-invested in the co-op. That means that the cost of living in the co-op will be kept as low as possible.

In most co-ops there is also some government support to make co-op living affordable for people with lower incomes. There are almost always long waiting lists for this subsidy.

Diverse and inclusive communities

The over 250,000 people who live in Canada's housing co-ops come from all walks of life and all income brackets. What they share is a commitment to making the co-ops work for everyone.

Co-op members often share their time and talents to enrich the lives of all – serving on the board, writing the newsletter, looking out for an elderly neighbour.

Intrigued? Then co-op living may be for you.

“The opportunity to be involved is a lot of fun; it makes me feel like I am contributing to my community.”

Ian Marcuse, Paloma Co-op



“When I moved in I was a single mom. There was always somebody I could turn to. I never felt alone.” Marion Wright, Windfield Co-op

Ready to make the move to Co-op living?:

- To find the co-op that best meets your needs, start with the Co-op Locator at www.chfcanada.coop. Or click on “In Your Region” to see if there is a local co-op housing federation in your area that can help you find co-ops with open waiting lists.
- Apply directly to the co-op you would like to live in, or in some cases, through a central waiting list run by your local government.
- Attend any information session held by the co-op.
- If you need assistance to pay the monthly housing charge, ask the co-op if the subsidized waiting list is open.
- Many co-ops have wheelchair accessible units. And don't hesitate to raise any other special needs with the co-op.

“When you live in a housing co-op you get to make choices about how you live. That makes your housing your home.” Doug Sider, Pinecroft Co-op Homes

The Co-op difference:

- Owned and controlled by the people who live there. No outside landlord. No surprise rent increases.
- Non-profit. Monthly charges are designed to cover expenses. Any surpluses are reinvested into the co-op.
- Inclusive. Co-ops welcome everyone who is ready to accept the terms of membership.
- A place to put down roots. No-one can sell your home out from under you. As long as you pay your monthly charge and uphold the other co-op rules, you can stay as long as you want.

For more information:



The CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING FEDERATION of Canada
La FÉDÉRATION de L'HABITATION COOPÉRATIVE du Canada